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Man's Appropriate Profit

BY SAMUEL H. MILLER

What profits a man . . . .? Matthew 16:26.

WHAT is it that man pursues with such incessant restlessness? Forever coming and going, continually seeking, there is something he wants—but what is it? You may ask him and he will be as uncertain and as startled as though the question had fallen from another world. Stand in any city street, amid the swirling waters of many faces, faces peering for something you do not see, beyond the others or within the self, boring into life, hunters all, in full bruit of pursuit. There seems to be something that must be won or life is a loss. Why do they labor and toil, hurry and suffer, barter with peril and pray for help, take responsibilities beyond their strength, repudiate comfort, willingly endure all kinds of hardships—what do they want?

Let us be no spectator of this situation, least of all in the sanctuary of humility and judgment. What is the profit we seek of all our anguish and striving? Put your life in your hands and look at it—recollect the innumerable experiences infinitely small with long roots in the unknown dark of other lives and deeper still in the beginnings of all things, with consequences full of ecstasy or sorrow—what was the profit of it all? These days and years of living, of sleeping and waking, of birth and helplessness, of perplexity and growth, of agony of body and travail of mind, the incomparable mystery of being, the long pain of learning even the slightest thing in a world where fact and mystery shall always be one, the cosmic labor of sunrise and sunset, of summer and winter, of youth and age, and all these broken tortures of the spirit in love and hate, quarrels and understanding, in sin and beauty—what have we been pursuing all these days and years?

Peary for twenty-four years lived with but one thought—reach the North Pole. Was that profit enough? Beethoven plunged into the unutterable tides

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of sound, deafened by a strange fate, hammered out on the quivering anvil of his own soul the immortal symphonies. Was that profit enough? The countless Midases of this modern scene, amassing with indefatigable energy and genius of acquisitiveness, vast fortunes as well as unparalleled power—is that profit enough?

Or take any humble man among us, subject to the mystery and pain of mortality, earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, or deprived of earning by forces beyond his ken, bravely facing and suffering the odds, mercilessly stormed by circumstances that seem to have no meaning—what will he seek for a profit of all these hurrying years? Will it be happiness, that most elusive of things, attending us at times when we have least reason to expect it and forsaking us when we took for granted that we merely had to turn a hand to enjoy it? Will it be to accumulate a few more movable and losable things, and with them the pride of possession, the comfort of security, the sense of solid substance, a sort of salvation by secular success, a satisfaction by diversion; will that profit be a heap of things we hold together by sheer might and the forbearance of others, but which death will scatter heartlessly to the four winds with its first cold breath?

Life is so various, man may have what he will for a reward. A name, excitement, reputation, wealth, comfort, power—they are there to choose, and many a man will make himself believe that he is amply paid for the pain of being human by the meager returns of fame or fortune. Yet man at his best, admired by the worst of us, is man repudiating these very things that the world counts important.

THOU FOOL! SAYS JESUS

Let us turn our question so that the light of Jesus' insight falls upon it. We will see directly and clearly the unprofitable profits he turned down as inappropriate and inadequate for human life at its best. Here is his repudiation in the plainest of terms: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Strangely enough, the one man out of the New Testament whom the twentieth century chose to imitate in its way of living has been the builder of bigger and better barns, who finally came to himself in the middle of the night with the accusation ringing in his ears—Thou fool, all your pains for this inappropriate profit! After all is said and done, after a man has the basic necessities of existence, he can only add to himself those things which insight and understanding possess regardless of their legal ownership. Let him who wishes, *own* the Rembrandts; they really belong to anyone with eyes and understanding to enter into the revelation they offer.

Or turn again to the temptings of Jesus and see the clear, unambiguous repudiation of inappropriate profit. Turn these stones into bread? No! Man shall not live by physical well-being alone. There is something in life besides being well fed. Even primitive man will fashion his spears with cunning to kill, but he will also put the quaint designs and colors of ghostly beauty on them, and though he throws with careful skill, he offers a prayer to the Unseen One.

Bow down, Satan said, and all these kingdoms wil be yours. No! The political power of demogoguery such as Satan suggests, of being merely the head slav of a crude and monstrous mob, with profit of short sighted and short-lasting success is the very prostitutio of being human. It is easy to see that there is n permanent profit here.

Then cast yourself down from the temple, be the oc casion of a miracle, and religious popularity will b yours. No! There is no profit for pain in religiou spectacularism. Those who seek miracles do not see him who is known in spirit and in truth. Such love o the spectacular is seed sprung up because of the shal lowness of the soil, quickly wilted and soon gone. It i scarcely an appropriate profit for a human being con scious of the claims of eternity.

"THE REIGN OF GOD"

Let nothing blind us to the decisiveness of these re pudiations. The consequences of these courageous cleav ages are in evidence everywhere throughout Jesus' min istry. Once for all he turns his back on these substitute and worthless accessories of human living. We hav quibbled in the name of necessity, we have compromise for reasons inexhaustible, but we have not followe through those difficult and necessitous problems wit the clean decisiveness of the Master. "You can't serv God and Mammon, too"; and the two he cleft apart so that they can never be put together again.

Having definitely turned from these unprofitabl profits, Jesus enters a mission of amazing significanc to the world. Even in the midst of our time-servin confusion, we can see to some degree the profit whic Jesus henceforth chose as adequate and appropriate t being human. In the simplest words that one may find it was to call attention to the "reign of God." Th Romans might be in control of the state, but Go reigned. The Pharisees were in control of the temple but God reigned. The world was full of tares, but th wheat was there, white to the harvest, for any ma with eyes and a sickle of understanding. God was bus at work in the world, but men didn't see him—Jesu pointed out in parable and deed.

God was in the very tragic circumstances that seeme to belie his presence—Jesus opened the eyes of the blind God was with men, but limping, broken, enslaved, hope less, they didn't know it—he told them, released them led them to their own victory in God. This was Jesus mission, to declare the good news that God reigned, an this the profit he counted worthy of life, to recogniz that reign amid the rules of earthly kings and the dis tractions of earthly powers.

THE INEVITABLE CROSS

But wait—that sounded so plain, the way so easy the success of it so certain that I fear I led you straigh past the most obvious feature of it all. It is true tha by everything Jesus did or said he gave evidence of be lieving that the most appropriate profit of all the com ing and going of life, of all the anguish and toil, was t perceive the "white harvest of God."

But look at what looms over that profit, filling th sky, blotting out the sun, casting a shadow down acros

the ages, until its tragic darkness falls upon our souls —a cross!

If I made it seem easy to get such profit of life, then look at that cross. If it happened in my telling that all Jesus needed to do was to announce the reign of God for it to be seen and accepted, then look at that cross. If I spoke of the "white harvest" as a thing to be casually reaped—then look at that cross! If it is true that man's most appropriate profit is to enter the "reign of God," it may just as truly be said that there is no way but by the cross, by the travail of pain; the pain of the temptings when the world is laid away; the pain of being born again, when the petty self-accumulating

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advantage is discarded; the pain of creation, when the stubborn, imperfect, even shameful occasions and elements of this world are transformed and revealed by the spirit's insight and power to be instruments of his perfect grace.

Illustrate the matter as often as we like from the history of this world's geniuses and we tell a twofold tale: men who were seers of the Light, revealers of the Kingdom, sons of the Eternal—but men who were crushed, overwhelmed, crucified. In them the flame burned to a white incandescence, an agony wherein the dross was burned away to leave the glory shining alone. These were the Suffering Servants of the All-High—Beethoven the Prometheus of music, Van Gogh the tortured outcast, Francis the troubador of poverty, Paul the overwhelmed Titan, Jeremiah the man of sorrows, Hosea the desolate hearted—these are they whose light has pierced the darkness of our mortal confusion and the profit they had of life was the cross looming over all their work.

Shall we dare to say, then, that the deliberate, unflinching choice of the cross is the most divine gesture of men? It is not an easy thing to say that through the years and through all that fills them full the heart of man is being made ready for such redemptive living. It seems a paradoxical, if not even a foolish, thing to believe.

And it is so, probably because we live for the most part intent on such tricks and maneuvers as to outwit all discomforture in any form. In moments of insight, however, it does become apparent, as George Eliot remarks in *Romola,* that "The highest sort of happiness brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain, by its being what we would choose before everything else in the world, because our souls see it is good."

MAN AT HIS HIGHEST, SUFFERS

Here then in Jesus Christ, in whom we see man revealed at his perfectest, the appropriate profit of being human is sight to see the "reign of God" amid all the distractions and evils of this world. But to make this plain, to take upon oneself the mediation of truth, not only to speak parables pointing to it but to live a parable containing it—that involves pain, frustration, agony, shame—in short, the cross. Whenever man rises to his highest possibilities, he is stricken, accursed, condemned for man:

Beethoven, stricken deaf, but hearing music none had ever heard before; Paul, struck blind, but seeing what scribes and disciples had never revealed; Francis, taking poverty for a bride, but possessing what riches had failed to give him; Van Gogh, crazy if you wish, but seeing heights and depths in nature that sane, complacent men had never been troubled to see; Jesus, crucified, but glorified by an incarnation of Eternal Life such as man had only dimly dreamed.

You may live without the cross, but you cannot live creatively without it.

It doesn't matter whether you happen to be just a poet or a priest, a parent or a scientist, you must deliberately lose your self-concern. You are the essential sacrifice on the altar of the Eternal. A man may get along decently, but he cannot get into the workshop of Eternal God, where God is hammering out the Thing no man hath yet seen, unless you carry the cross of such creation. It is the symbol and sign of man at his best, deliberately assuming the agony out of which the new creation shall rise, in preference to the comfort in which the old order lies a moveless prey to nibbling time.

THE CHIEF END OF MAN

What is the chief end of man? Into what shall he throw all the weight of days and days and days? Destined for imponderable yearnings and tragic perplexities, to what shall he point them? Burdened with an eternal torment, restlessly seeking, peering always into the dark, pursuing Something lest life be only the hollow echo of his own voice—what is the profit of his pain but to glorify God, which is to be interested in what God is doing, and to enjoy him forever, by sharing in that creation whose price is a cross and whose profit is eternal life?

Buried Alive

By Harris E. Kirk

Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. Exodus 2:15.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Hebrews 11:27.

THE other day a friend who has long occupied an influential position said to me: "I am buried alive: can you help me to a change of work?" Now what was I to say to him? We all know the meaning of this phrase. It describes not a bodily condition, but a state of mind, in which the sap and sparkle have gone from life, in which all novelty has passed from work, and where the daily round is one of routine and boredom. When confronted with the question we ask how men get this way. And what may be said to deliver them from such a state of mind?

Naturally my thoughts turned to the Bible, for I knew that there I should find the same experience over and over again. When the mind is visited with no new thoughts, when familiar tasks become unattractive, life becomes sodden and heavy, the way to arouse it is to associate your experience with that of another, and no circumstance arises that has not appeared somewhere in the Bible.

The value of this biblical retrospect is unique in this, that we have a continuous view of life under spiritual guidance. If we are to escape the tomb, if we are ever to break out of the fast enclosing walls of routine and familiarity, God must deliver us; yet the condition on which he will do this is that we shall keep vitally in touch with him. This is the very essence of faith, and this is the lesson taught by the completed action which is set forth in these passages concerning Moses. Let us consider this:

Here is an experience vividly described in the life of one of the greatest men that ever lived. It is not easy at first to imagine that great men suffer as we do under the stresses of circumstances, but they do, and no book is so frank about it as the Bible. But we have here something more important: the interpretation of the experience. We see it not only in its origin, but in its completion.

I. THE WILDERNESS MOOD

What was the experience of Moses? And what were the reasons he was here in the Midianitish wilderness? We are told that he had taken a very great decision. For years reputed to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he had lived amid the splendor and luxury of the Egyptian court, until he had reached a state of satiety and boredom that ever comes with too much magnificence and luxury. He was not happy in his position, for he was living under false pretenses. A child of the oppressed people of God, he often wished he knew how to get out of that gilded cage, and lead a man's life. One day, mightily moved by this spirit of distaste, he identified himself with his oppressed people, interfered with a taskmaster, killed him and hid his body in the sand. It was one of those mistaken acts by which a man declares his determination to have done with a useless life, and he knew that from that moment he had broken away from his Egyptian bondage, and identified himself with his oppressed people.

Thus, as little as he realized it, the later historian describes the act as a refusal to live any longer amid Egyptian splendor, preferring to take his part in the sufferings and miseries of the people of God. The method was perhaps a mistaken one, but the motive was splendid, yet Moses had to learn perhaps the most bitter lesson of young reformers, that fine impulses do not necessarily carry with them ability to lead. His own people rejected his advice, and overtaken with terrible fear, he fled from the land into the heart of the wilderness of Midian, and there he sat down by a well.

Was ever such a contrast presented in the career of a great man? From the splendor of a princely court to sitting down by a well in the wilderness, the companion of dull shepherds and countrymen, and to sit there for forty long weary years. No man was in a better position to speak of himself as buried alive than Moses at that time. As time passed his bitterness and loneliness would increase as he remembered his past. The discontent and shame of his false position in the household of the king would be forgotten, and he would think only of its splendor. He recalled the fine impulse which moved him to break out of his prison, to identify himself unselfishly with his own people, and of how they rejected his leadership with scorn.

It is a terrible thing to look back into the past, to consider some fine decision, some great choice, some lofty renunciation where you had victory over yourself, and then to trace your present boredom with life, your obscurity, your commonplace experience to that very choice. How easy to wish you had never done it! How easy, too, to blame your associates for all this, and to wish them elsewhere! And then to grow more and more unhappy, and discontented, until the feeling that you are buried alive is precisely the way you would describe your life.

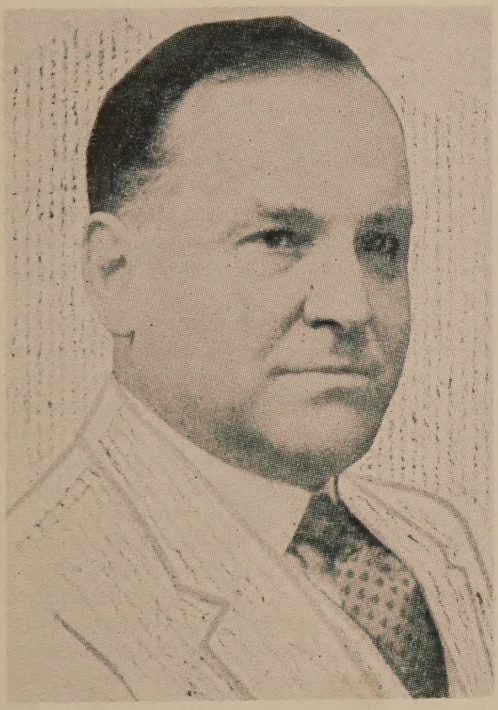
Add to this the passionate desire to escape from your confined position, the longing for adventure, for thrill, for sparkle in life, no matter at what cost. It takes a long time to develop the attitude of acceptance toward one's lot. The prevailing mood of such a period is one of rebellion, and of protest against people or times or circumstance. And even God is not left out of account. How passionately a soul will cry out in its darkness: "Why hast thou left me to serve alone? Why hast thou shut me up in this deep darkness? And brought me so low in my small estate?"

This, I think, is the most dangerous period of life, for here if anywhere we are apt to yield to temptations, to abandon positions, and to fling ourselves into disastrous relationships in bitter protest against life itself; and when you add another aspect to this it almost seems as though we are utterly separated from the sources of recovery; for here, too, we doubt our principles, question our most assured beliefs, when the line between right and wrong becomes so blurred as to make us indifferent to the outcome of action.

Moses felt all this, the power of contrast between the then and the now, the rising tide of passionate resentment against his condition, and the slow spreading fog over the clearest principles of action.

II. *PREPARATION FOR GREAT LIVING*

And yet this was not all. Other things were there to make this man accept his lot, manfully face his destiny, and finally to turn that cramped and obscure experience into the finest possible preparation for life and leadership. That constitutes the very fine interpretation given by the New Testament. Moses' action was really an expression of faith, where faith meant fidelity to the highest principles of action; of loyalty to that which he



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knew to be right. That rightness of decision had carried him out of the splendor of Pharaoh's court into the dreary dullness of the wilderness; yet when time passed a little and the mind gathered up its graver thoughts the man became aware of the sterling strength of that position. A man who is doing what is right, whose motives are prompted by the highest and most unselfish impulses is not going to be left desolate, no matter how hard his circumstances appear to be.

And all those wild tendencies to drift with the times, to fling away the high and holy impulses of his soul, were checked in him by memory. He would remember his childhood, the stories told him by his mother; his passionate and ambitious youth and how he kicked against the goads of his idle and luxurious state, and how, finally, he had taken the initiative, and broken out of his gilded cage into the open air. This was dangerous, of course, but although it had brought him into the present position of obscurity, still nothing could take from him that fine memory. He would remember how he had been told of the divine purposes, of the mighty hand of God upon his people, and there in the wilderness he would strengthen his resolution by telling himself: "Because this happened to me then, I dare not fail now!"

Let this sink into your minds. We always have this mighty resource to make us faithful under pressure. Think of our past, of the root of it in race and breed; of the unnumbered blessings we gained from those who bore us, who endowed our minds with fine principles and high hopes; think of all this and then say to yourself: because this happened to me then, I dare not fail now! Yes, and more, too, because this happened to me then, I know my life is being guided aright, I know that this dullness will end and eventually I shall come to know the meaning of it all.

Thus, in the soul of Moses, took shape the great purpose of his life. "Joy impregnates, but sorrows bring forth!" He does not put it in a great phrase, but the historian of the New Testament does when he says he endured because he saw the invisible. That is the essence of waiting upon God. And how wonderfully life, when kept steadily to its highest path, leads us into regions where more and more we realize that the invisible aspect of life is the more real, the more durable, yea, and closer, too, to us than we once imagined. So far from separating him from God, this long pedestrian experience in Midian had brought him closer to God. The sameness of the landscape remained, the monotony of the work remained, the dull simplicity of his associates remained, yet amid it all God grew upon the soul until he became the supreme conviction of that noble mind.

No more could he think of himself as buried alive, but in this renewal of strength, this awakening of the spirit to higher realizations, Moses endured because he saw the invisible.

III. *ENDURANCE—THEN POWER*

Now endurance under these conditions is the greatest experience of a worth-while life. To endure is to keep inviolate amid all the changes of time a thing of value; no matter how hard pressed, no matter how bitter and desolate the outlook seems, to keep inviolate that loyalty to God and the highest which is the essence of piety and faith.

And I know full well I am speaking to those who for the most part can find a good deal in the story of Moses here with which to sympathize. Your life is hard and commonplace, and perhaps dull and uninspiring. We, too, have learned but poorly the lesson of acceptance. We kick against the goads, we rebel against the enclosing walls, we sometimes say to ourselves that we are buried alive. We, too, know those wild passions for deliverance, that wish to live vividly even at the cost of all we have hardly won from our past. We, too, might think we are sitting down by some wilderness well, the companion of dull and unthinking folk, when we might have lived in splendor had we not been moved to do some foolish thing.

Yes, all such thoughts are not far removed from our mental states, but I would remind you of something deeper in your life, that guiding providence which molds the soul for its eternal experiences; that wonderful past

to which we owe so much and to arouse us amid our dullness to heroic acceptance of our lot.

To accept it faithfully as those who know that sometime we shall be brought to clearer skies where we shall see more intelligently into the heart of things; and where we shall discover that by sustaining this noble attitude we are enduring because we see the invisible; when we can affirm our faith in face of the dullest outlook:

I have faith such end shall be:
From the first Power was—I knew.
Life has made clear to me
That, strive but for closer view,
Love were as plain to see.

When see? When there dawns a day,
If not on the homely earth,
Then yonder, worlds away,
Where the strange and the new have birth,
And Power comes full in play.

Luke—An Imaginary Autobiography

By Stanley A. Hunter

IN Greek my name is Loukas, in Latin Lucius—Luke to you. I was born in Antioch in the year 20 A. D. of Greek ancestry. Antioch, 200 miles north of Jerusalem, is a city almost as large as Rome. It has many ancient temples, two long colonnaded streets, a stadium in the mountains and a paved road leading down the swift Orontes river to a park several miles away.

The streets of my city were lined with crowded tenements, filled with laborers from peasant homes who were barely managing to keep alive. In my boyhood I could not understand why so many boys of my own age were thin, poorly educated, hungry and ill-clothed, nor why a few rich men had such great villas and estates. When I asked about this, I was told that it always had been so but I could not but wonder why.

As a boy I heard many different languages, among them Aramaic, the mother tongue of Palestine. Camel caravans bringing embroideries from India, silks from China, weapons and linens from Damascus, Persian rugs, drugs and dates from Jericho, swung along our city streets. The fathers of some of my companions bought and sold these goods. Commerce from Asia went through my city as the commerce of Egypt and Africa passed through our rival Alexandria in Egypt. Fathers of other friends of mine owned ships, and from them I heard of distant places which I longed to see some day. One day my father took me on a horseback ride to our seaport, 25 miles distant. The first half of the journey of seven hours was on a well-paved Roman road. Ships and sailors interested me, as well as the wharves with their straw containers containing dried apricots and figs and dates and licorice roots. The sailors gave me a sense of belonging to a federation of a large part of the world.

The athletic contests which the Romans were constantly holding in the stadium captivated me. I knew many Romans who were army people or administrative officials. From them I learned a sense of order and discipline. They had conquered most of the known world. What men they were to bring their peace to the tribes and nations making up their empire of one hundred and twenty million people! They were practical men—builders of roads and aqueducts that would surely endure through the centuries.

MY CHOICE OF A LIFEWORK

In Antioch were many Jews who kept their racial heritage. My family had been considerably influenced by some who were broadminded enough to relax the food laws of their race. Later I came to enjoy Roman citizenship. My father told me of their idea of stewardship of life and property, of responsibility to the God in the Scriptures. From the Old Testament I learned much and came to understand the keen ethical discernment of the prophets. The Scriptures were available to me in the Greek version, the Septuagint, so named because it had seventy translators.

My scholarship was the best the city offered. My private teacher taught me music, which included mathematics, as well as literary and artistic culture. By gymnastics we meant individual training in handwork and coordination rather than organized games. Being a Greek I was taught to seek for beauty. Sometimes I dreamed of becoming a painter or sculptor or architect, for I loved beautiful temples and works of art. As I tramped with my father by the big estates of exploiters or chatted with villagers, I longed for some new power or spirit to sweep through our customs and institutions. People were cynical and disillusioned. Early I decided to study medicine and make my life count for good, although I had the tastes of an artist and my cultural training had fitted me for literature. I have always found pleasure in trying to express myself in writing. I had been trained in handling sources and telling a story well, preserving the Greek sense of balance or proportion.

Before I was twenty years old I chose a medical course. Medical training was still under the influence of Hippocrates, the founder of medical science four centuries before. He had expounded the healing power of nature which later I identified with the healing power of God. I was made to learn his many books by heart. I became familiar with the use of herbs from the Orient, balsam from Jericho, eye liniment from Pergamos. I learned how oils and ointment help wounds to heal and how the alcohol in wine serves as a disinfectant. I became skillful in setting bones and using fomentations, and even did some helpful surgery. Everybody in my day believed that demons cause disease. At one of the temples dedicated to Asklepios, I took my interneship and learned there the value of fresh air, water cures, massage and psychotherapy. Ministering to wounded gladiators, I came to see how horribly cruel was the popular system of combat. For example, seven hundred

This "imaginary autobiography" is based upon Graham C. Hunter's recent book, *Luke—First Century Christian,* published by Harper & Brothers.

pairs of men, poor prisoners of war, far from home, were made to murder one another with sword or spear in a single day in Beirut, a city of my province, to satisfy the blood lust of the populace. Internes like myself were compelled to attend the brutal fights in the stadium. I found that I had a good bedside manner. My companions grew careless about human suffering, but I never did. I loved my work and my people said that my touch was helpful. My optimism and sense of humor helped my patients. I found joy in overcoming disease and pain, but always had the urge to go further and make wholesome the undercurrent of people's lives, for that seemed to me to be the most necessary thing of all. What fears tormented most of my patients!

STANLEY A. HUNTER

The old Greek religion was practically gone, only its outer form remained. We no longer believed that real deities abode on Olympus, but we knew the myths and tolerated those who still believed them. Processions had to be financed by the state. The earthquake of the year 37 A. D. damaged the hundred-year-old temples of my youth, but they had lost their drawing power even before. The ridicule of the philosophers caused us to regard all religion as superstition or even the opiate of the people, but no substitute was offered us. Consequently people were experimenting with charms, incantations and psychic practices. The luck-giving cults of Dionysius and Orpheus imported from Greece were increasingly popular. The mystery cults dramatizing ancient myths gave some people a sense of deliverance from demons and the fear of death. Many joiners found a certain satisfaction in their aesthetic rituals.

I found no peace in my search for truth, for their myths could not satisfy the hunger of my soul. I looked for awhile into Judaism but did not care for its exclusive food laws and difficult initiatory rites. Then one happy day I met some followers of a New Way, as they called it. They were from the island of Cyprus, visible from the port of my city, and Cyrene in Africa. They told me the strange story of one Jesus, who had gone about doing good as a healer, who loved nature and who taught how life could be adjusted to God and his fellow men, and joy and peace be found. He had been crucified on a hill outside Jerusalem by the Romans on a false charge of treason. Then the strangest thing had happened. He could not be holden of death, but had risen again, and wherever his disciples had gone they experienced his abiding presence. They were a remarkable brotherhood, enthusiastic and adventurous, seeking to build a new world order which they kept calling the Kingdom of God. They knew that it had to begin first with themselves. They were attractive, joyous and vital. They had faith, confidence and drive.

THE 'NEW WAY' BRINGS PEACE

I sought them out as an inquirer and investigated the cause of their magnetism. I decided that they had caught it from the Leader, Jesus. They gave me the wonderful words he had spoken, which they knew by heart or had in writing. I saw that these sayings were not only full of poetry but offered an adequate and satisfying interpretation of life. The prayer, "Father, Thy Kingdom come," gripped me. They started each day with the thought of a guiding and power-giving spirit which made living an adventure with the joy of finding opportunities to help other personalities by the power of the Name. It was a great day for me when I began to walk in the New Way, and my thoughts turned away from myself toward action. I experienced an achievement of throbbing insight which they termed "the receiving of the Holy Spirit." The New Way bound together into one passion many longings which had kept me restless. Of some of them I had been scarcely conscious, but I knew them to be for personal completion, for a promise of life after death, for an explanation of the universe, for active compassion toward the wounded as well as for the common people and the villagers, for a hope of a redeemed society, and for a personal Leader, Master or Savior, to whom I could yield my whole allegiance. I came to call him "The Pioneer of Life." The stern ethical requirements unheard of in the popular religions of our day attracted me.

I offered my life in the service of this new faith which was to take the place of wife and a home. I have never regretted my decision. It has brought me enlargement and joy and peace. I am now about fifty years old and do not know what the future will hold. Many of my comrades have suffered martyrdom but whatever life holds for me is in God's plan.

"FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS"

The disciples were first called Christians in my city. What leaders we had—the magnanimous Barnabas, the aristocratic Manaen, Lucius of Cyrene who bore my name; Simeon Niger, a black man; Titus, the young Greek; and the incomparable Paul, who made tents but was such a valuable teacher that Barnabas put him

on full time on salary as teacher. When he came to us we were on friendly terms with the Jews who still let us use their synagogue. Tolerance was taken for granted in our atmosphere.

When we heard of the suffering of our fellow Christians because of the depression in Palestine, we sent a relief cargo of wheat down the coast, and I went along with Barnabas, Paul and Titus as physician. I always longed to travel and find what was beyond the horizon. On the journey of two hundred miles I wrote down some of our experiences. The effects of the famine were terrible to see. Children would lie on the ground face down to try to lessen the gnawing pangs of hunger in their distended abdomens. When I talked with peasants who had lost their holdings to support luxurious magnates far away, my heart was torn by sympathy. It was out of this experience that I decided to become a missionary like Barnabas and go about helping the oppressed.

TEACHING MEN HOW TO LIVE

I came to see that it was a wonderful thing to heal men's bodies, but also that men and women must be taught how to live. To give them courage and confidence in the universe and in God seemed to me the most important contribution which I could offer, and I decided to train myself more adequately in the essentials of our Christian faith. On my return I prepared to carry the message widely. Beyond the mountains to the north were a thousand untouched villages, a hundred cities, and important Roman colonies. Bithynia especially appealed to me.

"The Way" became a sea lane for our little boats as well as a road on land for our feet and the Mediterranean seemed to us to be part of the highway prepared for our God, of which Isaiah had spoken. When Barnabas and Mark sailed with Paul for Cyprus, I accompanied them. We went further than planned, going through Galatia. Our experiences have been often described. In Lystra Paul was stoned. We organized converts into churches as we retraced our steps homeward. Later, I started on foot for Bithynia, but being blocked, turned to Troas, the historic seaport of the Trojans made famous by the story of the wooden horse in the pages of Homer. Here Paul and Silas joined me, and a Galatian slightly younger than myself whose name was Timothy. Across the north corner of the Aegean sea lay Macedonia in Europe and after Paul told how in a vision a man of Macedonia had said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," we took his experience as of divine origin. "Immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called for us to preach the gospel unto them." We were sure that the Spirit of Jesus was guiding us, going on before. This happened in the year 49.

In Europe many strange adventures befell us. We were in danger continually. In Philippi, for example, we restored to sanity a neurotic slave girl who, working herself up into a frenzy, would tell fortunes for her owners. They objected to our befriending her. Paul and Silas were beaten at their instigation by the Roman police and imprisoned. Despite their pain in their cramped position in the stocks of the inner prison they sang hymns together at midnight! Their cheerfulness and courage as well as their avoidance of bitterness won over the warden. Here as also in Thessalonica and Berea we drew together into societies that were soon to become influential, morally earnest people, capable and eager for a better social order. In 51 A. D. in Corinth things broke favorably for us when two successive presidents of the Synagogue, the city treasurer and other leaders joined us. Gallio rendered an important legal decision in this city entitling us to all the privileges of teachers of a recognized religion. I felt this was a turning point in Christian history. The decision meant that Christians were guaranteed liberty of conscience and might enjoy the free exercise of our religion, with rights of assembly for worship.

In the following years many stirring events happened. In Ephesus Paul was imprisoned, but later released by the Roman governor Silanus. At times our success amazed even ourselves, for it seemed too good to be true. We Christians found that we were elevating the entire population, lifting people out of superstition and degradation into courage and faith. In other cities the reception varied. In Ephesus we had a strange encounter with the silversmiths, for where the profit system is endangered you find trouble. I marvel as I look back on the accomplishments of the thirteen years between 43 and 56 A.D. We were able by God's help to change the atmosphere and spirit of no less than twelve great cities. We had traveled on foot, horseback or by boat constantly across a territory twelve hundred miles east and west and five hundred miles north and south.

NEW ADVENTURES IN JERUSALEM

In the spring of the year 56 I sailed with Paul and seven others to take an offering to the needy saints in Jerusalem to bind together the disciples of both West and East. Great changes after my visit of thirteen years before were noticeable. Some leaders were gone—Peter and James and John, and Mary, the mother of Mark, in whose home the disciples had first gathered. It was a sad time. There was a change of atmosphere which worried me. After a week's stay Paul was suddenly mobbed in the Temple area on the false charge of bringing a Greek into the Temple! After being beaten by the crowd, he was arrested by the Roman guard and sent to prison to Caesarea by the sea with two and a half battalions of soldiers. We never dreamed that his imprisonment was to be a matter of years, with the execution block at the end in Rome, and possibly it was just as well that we were ignorant of the outcome. I left no stone unturned to secure his release, but was able to secure for him only "indulgence," which meant medical care, writing materials, letters and the opportunity for conferences. Because we were both Roman citizens, our treatment was, of course, different from what it would have been otherwise.

The idea came to me of taking up the pen in Paul's behalf. I thumbed over my travel notes and teaching materials and racked my memory. I wanted to get down on papyrus the record of Paul's work through the past

twenty-six years in order that people who looked askance at his eight imprisonments might understand the reasons for it. So I determined to tell the story of his missionary career and make it a defense of the whole Christian undertaking. I put to good advantage the months of waiting. In the land where Jesus had lived I sought out the exact truth about many of the early incidents of his life. Out of my notes came my record which you call the Gospel and the Acts. The word "Gospel!" means good news, and that was what I tried to give in my account. The time had arrived when I was to lay down the surgeon's scalpel and take up the writer's pen. My purpose in Acts was to defend Paul and to show that he was not seditious. His conflicts I felt were to his credit. The new movement must be presented as law abiding rather than lawless, as patriotic and not anarchistic, even if to some it seemed revolutionary, turning the world upside down. Of course religion must never be satisfied with things as they are, nor should Christians be afraid of change.

WRITING THE LIFE STORY OF JESUS

For the first part of Acts I drew on two written documents as sources and in the Prologue I told how many had taken in hand to set forth the story of the things which had been fulfilled. I gathered many graphic stories concerning Philip who was my host in Caesarea, and others in which his friends figure. I was deeply interested in women and their work for the Kingdom and took pains to mention incidents concerning them just as I did concerning the poor and people of other races. I did not complete the book there. In Rome I added the closing chapters to Acts, but really never finished the book. Although the Book of Acts came out of heartbreak and disappointment and the long agony of Paul's imprisonment of two years, I tried to make it one of the happiest books the world has ever known.

People are mistaken in thinking that I wrote my Gospel first. As Paul's imprisonment lengthened, I decided also to write the actual life story of Jesus the Savior, courageous and courage giving, who had gone about doing good. In my years in Antioch I had access to a written collection of the sayings of Jesus, which had been circulating for nearly twenty years. Jesus' sensitiveness to beauty and to the spirit behind it, his sparkling humor and awareness of human need had captured me. But it was incomplete and did not give the full picture.

For about thirteen years I had carried this searching and illuminating collection with me everywhere I went. I determined to enlarge upon it, believing that the best defense of Christians would be the presentation of the commanding figure of Jesus himself, friend of the common people, and clear thinker. This old collection is really the core of my own volume. I hunted for authentic accounts of the matchless words and remarkable deeds of Jesus. I wanted to set forth clearly what are the essentials of the gospel. I sought for incidents revealing his compassion for the simple villager, the peasant, the city laborer and those things which show his social creativeness, his mystical dependence on prayer and his radiant joyousness. In the villages of Palestine I heard stories at first hand from "saints" who had seen Jesus.

APPRAISING JESUS

I applied two tests to the information which came to me, before it was chosen for my account. I asked about its accuracy and I rejected materials that I was not sure were historic. The second test which I applied was aptness. Many stories were circulating about which were not at all like the Jesus of whom I had heard. I asked, "Will this material help people to live more happily and abundantly?" I knew how heavy were the burdens which they must carry. Profiteering leaders, unscrupulous landholders, selfish buyers exploited them continually. Jesus, I came to see, was the champion of the rights of man. A sense of urgency was upon me to write, for the time was critical. Let men adopt a new way of thinking before it is too late! Let men everywhere repent, obey God, and turn toward compassion on all those in need. I called for decision. Jesus, I showed, was an imperial figure calling men to judgment.

I was not able to finish the Gospel before we left Caesarea. We appealed Paul's case to the supreme court in Rome when that seemed finally our only recourse. In September we sailed, Paul and Aristarchus being regarded as prisoners. The journey to Italy was a long drawn out adventure. The sea was terrifying. I have given all the details of the journey in a special chapter in Acts. At Myra we transferred to a wheat ship from Alexandria. In the awful storm Paul steadied the crew and gave them courage, as we struggled with the sea! It seemed that we could never make it, but the sailors beached the sinking ship on the island of Malta. We came ashore precariously on planks after a night of distress. All my precious notes and baggage were lost, save what I carried in a metal tube around my neck. As we were compelled to spend the entire winter on the island, I practiced my profession and healed the diseased, who also greatly honored us. We won a host of friends. When we sailed they put on board such things as we needed, and bade us a tearful farewell. In the spring of 59 we embarked on another wheat ship and so came to Naples. Imagine my thrill at approaching Rome on the seven hills, the capital city of the empire, with its forum and its great temples! We drove up the well paved road to Rome. Here we found friends who helped us rent a house on the Viminil Hill where Paul was permitted to live, guarded by a soldier. Again I practiced medicine for a living. I was full of hope, never realizing that years of disappointment and waiting lay ahead. We met with our Christian friends constantly and kept busy as always.

NEW LIGHT FROM MARK'S GOSPEL

Before two years had passed I received a travel-worn book of leaves sewn together with part in the center missing. It was a life story of Jesus which I found to be quite different from mine. It was written by a man of Jerusalem who had taken the name of Marcus. You know it as Mark's Gospel but his name was John. He had been the interpreter of Peter and later had gone

to northern Egypt. I copied into my own book practically all the new information which it contained. I found that I had reproduced 350 of Mark's 651 verses, but I did not copy the language exactly. You may imagine that it was a treasure trove to me. I needed its facts telling what Jesus had done in the villages of Galilee, healing the sick and defending the poor, as well as its information about his last week in Jerusalem.

I took from Mark, for example, some twenty-three incidents of Jesus curing the sick. I changed some things to make the narrative more clear to the Roman, and also in some instances I took the liberty of improving the language. I also restored to the Gospel the notes of free will and joy and hope which Mark had omitted, according to my judgment. Religion to me had come to mean to go on working steadfastly, actively, adventurously, because God was behind the processes of history, with the Spirit of Jesus on God's right hand, in active and sympathetic control, somehow guiding and helping men through their uncertain lives.

TO MY FRIEND THEOPHILUS

So about the year 61 when I was forty years old I put in final form my two volumes intended for Roman readers. I addressed my book to my friend and patron Theophilus, a Roman official at the eastern end of the Roman Empire.

I tried always to keep myself out of the picture, for I have never taken myself too seriously. I have kept my sense of humor, and I even let it play upon some of my pages. I have enjoyed presenting such incongruous pictures as the hated tax collector Zaccheus up a tree in a most undignified position. I also told how four ingenious villagers tore a hole in the ceiling of Peter's village home. I related how Peter and John (of all people!) were once asked for money when of silver and gold they had none.

True optimism need not be shallow but should be realistic. I know that the good is just as real and factual as the ugly. I do not believe that the world is hopeless. I believe that the existing social order can be redeemed. I believe in man and I look for the Kingdom of God—with good tidings for the poor and the ending of gladiatorial and nationalistic murder, the overcoming of exploitation and the removal of all kinds of superstition and disease.

Triumph Out of Disaster

WOULD men in these days of breakdown and seeming failure learn how to wrest triumph out of disaster? If ever there was seeming failure and disaster, it was at the end when Christ's life was snuffed out in a criminal execution. His splendid mission to save humanity apparently ended in a fiasco. His closest followers in his hour of need actually deserting and one betraying him. Yet in some strange way he knew how to turn the very shame of that pitiful death into the crowning triumph of his life. The cross, symbol of utter disgrace and failure, he has triumphantly turned into a symbol of eternal victory.

FRANCIS B. SAYRE.

The Stages of Discipleship

BY MAURICE W. FOGLE

When day broke, he summoned his disciples. Luke 6:13.

THE disciples of Christ were chosen by day. However, through both night and day, sunlight and darkness, they were expected to follow him.

The followers of Jesus were not disciples all at once, for one is not made a disciple at a single summons. Discipleship involves discipline, there being a long process of development and achievement. If we study the record of Jesus' men, we shall see that they went through many transitions, and that there were certain rather definite periods of discipleship. Furthermore, as we observe his followers now, we can trace like experiences.

I

In this matter of discipleship, there is first of all the stage of fascination.

Jesus said to the fishermen of Galilee, "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men." He called to Matthew, "Follow me." They all promptly followed. Sometimes we make too much of that. We call their going a great sacrifice. But sacrifice is not keenly felt in the period of fascination. This was not sacrifice; sacrifice would come later. This was fascination. The church has thought of these first followers as full of daring and bravery, although not so much courage was required as is sometimes supposed.

Jesus was a new leader, and there is always a strong attraction about a new leader. It is not hard for a new preacher, a new teacher or a new philosopher to get a following. Jesus was the most compelling personality that ever came to earth. He drew men to him even before he was lifted up. We readily imagine that Jesus had about him that magnetism which attracted men the moment he looked at them. I suppose if we had a thousand of the world's renowned together and Jesus were among them, we could detect him the most readily.

There is that period when all who come to Christ are thrilled by the charm of belonging to him and his church. Their joy runs as high as a mountain stream in spring days. It is natural. New Christians live under the propulsion of a new love. But such fervor does not always last. That first joy tones down. It ceases to grip and to hold. And because the seed has not reached down through the rock, the individual withers away.

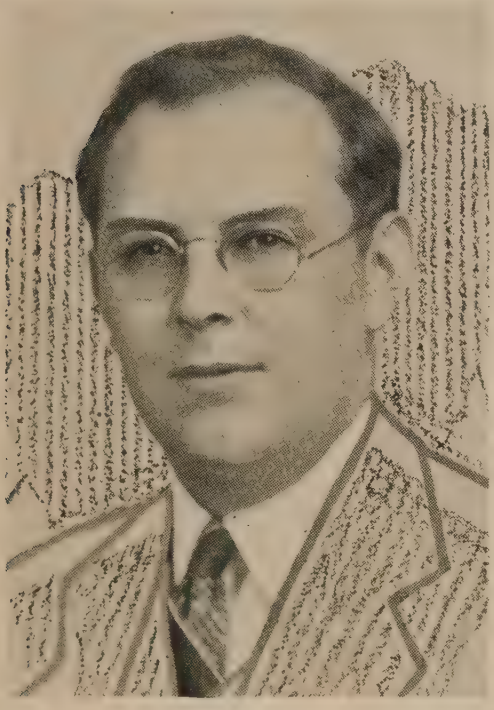
II

Thousands followed Jesus in the early days of his career. Millions were at his beck and call. He could have had, instead of twelve, twelve times twelve, or a hundred times twelve. But not always would this be true: the crowd would thin out, the circle would narrow, there would come a time later when there would be only a few. For the fascination of a new leader wanes.

The second stage or period of discipleship is the period of illumination.

By the period of illumination, I mean the time when divine light bursts forcibly upon the soul. It involves keen apprehension and deep understanding. We read about it in John's Gospel when Jesus refused to be their king, and wanted simply to be their teacher, their Savior. "Upon this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." Jesus therefore said unto the twelve, "Would ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Thou hast the words of eternal life." Not all of Jesus' followers saw this. But Peter did. He knew that he could go to no other save Jesus, and be satisfied.



MAURICE W. FOGLE

Something like this happens in the career of a minister. The first year or so, the people are interested in him, what he is like, and how he appears. Then, after a time, there is a change. People cease to go to hear a man because he is a new preacher. If for any reason they go to hear him, it is not because he is the new preacher, but because he is Christ's preacher, God's preacher. If his words are spirit and life, then will his work be long and lasting. What he says will come to possess the minds of his people; what he says will be taken with authority by the church.

There is the time when truth overbalances personality. At first, in making new acquaintances, a leader's personality is the strongest influence; but after a time, it is truth that wins over the other.

It was at this period that Jesus became fundamentally the teacher. He had taught before, but now his teaching efforts were intensified. He threw practically all his efforts in that direction. He did not care to be known as a healer, but as a teacher. He had procured and distributed common bread and food to the multitude. Now he would distribute the Bread of Heaven—to the multitude, if they would receive it—if not, to the few. From now on, Jesus did not ask his followers to follow him alone, but to follow his words, which he said were spirit and were life.

The multitude does not heed the teacher. Many will come to see the miracle-worker; many will come to hear preaching. Not so many will come to hear teaching. This does not mean the mere teaching of the church school. The multitude does not yearn for any wise teaching about Jesus or God.

If one develops in his Christian life as he should, there comes a time when he will want to know the words of Jesus, when he will turn often to his Bible, hungry to read what the Master said, and when he will turn eagerly to his preacher to listen for every word of Jesus which the preacher repeats and every word he uttered in his behalf. At this stage one becomes more nearly Christian.

There are not many in the average church, as yet, who have reached this stage of illumination, who have caught the divine glimpse of Jesus as teacher, of Jesus speaking wondrous truth. When one reaches the place where he is overwhelmed with eagerness to learn more of Jesus, he has reached the second stage of discipleship.

What a teacher he was! Nobody has ever surpassed him in subject or in method. The periodical *Time* carried a story about a teacher of music who received $40 per half hour for the instruction she gave her pupils. Would you pay $40 per half hour to read the words of Scripture? Would you pay $40 per half hour to sit at the feet of Jesus? It is more important than music. Jesus teaches that master subject, Life! It was no wonder Peter said: "Master to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

III

But the third stage is even harder to undergo: the period of crucifixion

One by one, two by two, sometimes a dozen at a time, the followers of Jesus left him. They went back and followed him no more. Now and then Jesus would look around and notice that there was a vacancy in the ranks. Another desertion had taken place. Paul had the same feeling later when he wrote, "Demas has forsaken me." There came to be only twelve in the upper room in Jerusalem. One, the traitor Judas, went out from there, and only the eleven faithful were left.

Faithful? Mark puts the final desertion thus, "They all left him and fled." So the group narrowed down again, only John being left, who, we are told, stood at the trial with Jesus. One had been permanently lost, the others were scattered over the outskirts of Jerusalem. Here was the hour of crucifixion. What disciple is worthy to be called a disciple of his lord unless he will stand with him in the hour of death? This is the hour for heroism or disgrace!

Yet, these disciples did not miss the crucifixion. Some of them may have sneaked back to witness it. Still, whether they saw it or not, they shared it. Do not think that Peter or James or any of the others missed

the cross. How did they share it? In their shame, their fear, their terror, their remorse, they suffered agony even as Jesus himself did. They had a part in his suffering.

Had they been as stone, had they been as hundreds of his followers then and now, they would not have cared. We know they loved him; and therefore, even though they were hidden away, they knew and wept and agonized. They shared his crucifixion because they loved him. Love shares the crucifixion. Love shares every crucifixion. God shares every crucifixion since the beginning of time. If we love the Master, we go back to the time of his cross and share with him the suffering. Do you not, if you are true Christians, enter into the fellowship of his suffering?

Poor, bewildered followers! Yet they were better than deserters. It is better to have loved and fled than never to have loved at all. The crucifixion was almost as hard on them as it was on Christ. It could not help but be. Their torture, in its kind, was quite as terrible.

For every follower of the Lord there will be crucifixion. You will not escape it. No one has ever escaped it. It comes. It may be misunderstanding, the desertion of friends, injury, malice, abandonment, slander, devices of all sorts. The cross is the invariable emblem of the social and spiritual order. Some have to be nailed to it; some, like Simon, have merely to carry it; some, like Mary, have to stand beneath it when a loved one is crucified thereon; but in one way or another, it belongs to every Christian.

Accept the cross. Wear it on your heart and in your life. Rise above it. Conquer it. But learn to love it, because it will save you and save many. God be thanked for the cross of Christ. God be thanked for our own crosses. They will all be needed to save the world.

Until you can bear the period of crucifixion, until you have gone down into the valley and the shadow of persecution and despair, you are untested. It is no shame, beloved of God, to be crucified. The shame is that you cannot bear your crucifixion.

IV

There is a stage of discipleship beyond crucifixion. That is the stage of conquest.

There are two flags for Christians. There is both the Christian flag, and the flag of Christian conquest. Why different, I do not know. They should both signify conquest.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, the disciples were reunited. They had regained their strength and courage. They were ready for a fresh start. As Matthew tells it, Jesus stood with them and said, "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the nations!" The disciples went. They kept going.

Of late there has been a great deal of delving into tradition and history to see where they went. It is thought that Thomas went to India and that John went to Asia Minor and that others went to certain assigned territories. The key truth is that the Bible does not tell us much about where they went. The Bible is little concerned about that. The great, vital fact of church history is that they went. Conquest is not a matter of place. It is a matter of spirit. If Europe, Asia, Africa looked all the same to Alexander the Great, Europe, Asia and Africa looked all the same to Jesus. All was to be God's territory. God's churches were to be planted everywhere.

So the disciples went, driven out and on. In the book of Acts, we see them ready—ready as men are ever ready in crisis to do the great thing. They were as arrows drawn to the head on the bow. They were as eagles poised for flight over the mountains. They were as airplanes set to swing out over the waters of the Atlantic or the Pacific. That was the spirit of Christ's men.

Who understands religion except he have a tremendous eagerness to go? The greatest men in religion today are those who have in them the spirit of missions and of conquest. Perhaps the most deeply spiritual books of the age are from Stanley Jones, India's missionary, and Kagawa, a Japanese Christian who resolves that Japan have a million Christians during his lifetime. They write with authority because they have the spirit of conquest.

Such disciples show us how much we lack being disciples. Somewhere along the line we have halted. Somewhere along the line we have failed. We must advance and not retreat. Will the church swing into another period of conquest? With God's help she will! For the sake of Christ, she must!

From stage to stage we move. Jesus chose twelve not to be his disciples but to *become* his disciples. He chose his church not to be, but to become and to keep on becoming his church. Not all at once! Not all at once! But ever growing, ever making progress, ever valiant, ever faithful. Thus shall ours be the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. In his name, disciples become conquerors.

Lights

By George H. Tolley

I am the light of the world. John 8:12.

JESUS Christ is indeed the light of the world! That light is imperatively needed today.

From bitter and tragic experience, many of us can now sympathize with the hero in one of H. G. Wells' novels. This perfectly normal and normally brave man has decided to pit his moral stamina against weird invisible forces which have caused a certain house to be called haunted. Plunging into the house on a dark night, he is amazed to find the living room ablaze with light. On the mantle piece is a row of candles, with flames pointing unruffled to the ceiling. But even as he watches them, one candle flickers and snuffs out, and for no discernible reason. Then a second and a third, and a fourth! As the last candle sputters and dies, plunging the house into a supersensitive, silent blackness, he runs from the house, cowed, routed, defeated. The bulwarks of logic and natural law upon which his courage had depended had cracked wide open. Now there was no support for his life.

Many a modern has watched the lights of his world go out, just like that. The betrayal of a friendship, the

inexplicable death of a dear one, the loss of one's position, or one's fortune—the shriek of war, the hopelessness of political corruption, the chaos on the labor-management front—all of this has conspired to leave many a heart cynical and disillusioned. There is no longer any sense of stability or security for anyone. The lights are going out, they say. Perhaps the lights of our civilization are being extinguished for all time, they think.

I

Yet if they will but look, there is still one light in the midst of all the confusion—a light which nothing can extinguish, a light from which all the candles of civilization can be rekindled, to glow more brilliantly. It is "the light of the world."

Oh, I know that some of you are incredulous. During the summer a friend of mine spoke for you. "I am growing increasingly impatient and annoyed by these pious parsons who prate endlessly about Christ being the general panacea of all our ills!" I know what he knew, what you know. To speak in such superficial fashion is wasting one's breath in futility. Christ is not the light of the world in any such easy fashion as this. His light is not even faintly discerned until one has wrestled long with the spirit of Jesus, has torn from Jesus' heart the deepest secrets it holds, has suffered in doing it even as he suffered upon the cross.

Even then one may not find what he seeks. If the end of his quest is the political constitution of some new utopian era, or the "open sesame" of some new economic paradise, he will be disappointed. The Jesus who lived two thousand years ago, who had never heard of belt-line assemblies and the "speed-up," nor competing, rival labor organizations and the "check-off," nor of sweat-shops and child labor, has nothing specific to offer him. But Jesus Christ, the eternal light, has something more eternal, and more eternally vital to offer—a knowledge of men, and the temptations which lead men into actions which cause our human lights to sputter and die.

II

Jesus also illumines for us our preoccupation with things.

What ghastly messes men get themselves into when their craving to possess exclusively that which others claim exclusively, rankles within their bodies. Japan hesitates not a second to murder, in cold blood, helpless, innocent Chinese mothers and babes. Italy sends its bombing squadrons to make a shambles of an ancient and beautiful Spanish city. But let us not imagine that France and Britain and our own America are lily-white saints. We, too, have helped to broadcast hatreds, suspicions and the acids of revenge.

What stark tragedies follow in the wake of men who, with eyes and hearts closed to the rights of others, trample heedlessly upon any and all, that their own coffers may be filled to overflowing. No man can escape from shame and loss of self-respect. No man can ever flee from the haunting accusations of guilt and sin. Wealth, power, comfort, luxury can never overpower the insidious and subtle sense of having betrayed one's best self under the pressure of mob hysteria or social approbation.

Look at it through the eyes of such a woman as Amelia Earhart. Shortly before her untimely death she wrote: "Some of my friends told me I was poorly prepared for my Atlantic flight in 1932. I took with me only what I wore—riding breeches, a silk shirt, and a leather flying costume. I brought no dress for 'the other side' and sent no advance agent to await me and look after my affairs on my arrival in Europe. I said nothing to the press. I took only twenty dollars and some food—a thermos bottle of soup and some tomato juice. If I succeeded, I knew everything would come out all right; if I failed, nothing would matter. My aim was to fly to Europe, and any unnecessary clothes, food or publicity would merely have claimed attention." Her pre-

George H. Tolley

occupation was with an idea, a noble ideal. And in her quest for it she found an inner satisfaction which defies description. Not battling for things, she would say, but in the conquest of a new highway for men, was her greatest happiness.

Now see the glorious glow of the light of the world: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesses."

III

Preoccupation with self is silhouetted unmistakably, too.

The perpendicular personal pronoun claims a monopoly on so many lives! The day is filled with the query, "What is going to happen to me?" or "What will be the consequences of this for me?" And the night resounds with the sigh, "What shall I do? What shall I do?"

The pathos and the conclusion is too vividly sug-

gested in a note found beside the cold body of a twelve-year-old girl who had committed suicide: "Dear Mother—I would rather be dead. I have suffered too much. You were always telling me: 'You have been seeing your father again.' I implore you that I have not. You will not have to keep me any more. I am going to die. You will have less work to do. You will have only two dishes to wash. I pray that you will be happy.—Your Christine, who is about to die."

What courage that note depicts! But will that mother ever get over the consequences of her eternal preoccupation with herself and what she mistakenly thought was her happiness? The immediate tragedy of so many broken homes appears in the children. Ultimately it beats back to the self-centered parents.

The boulevards of modern life are cluttered with priests and levites who cannot soil their hands even to aid a bruised and beaten victim of the highwaymen. Unless a service is clean and cultured, or spectacular and showy, we cannot be bothered with it—more's the pity. For by enclosing ourselves within our self-erected and self-contained shells, we are surely making ourselves to be fertile fields for debilitating anxieties and worries and making our world to be virgin territory for the greedy, unscrupulous self-seeking which extinguishes the lights of civilization.

It was the Light which made of the Good Samaritan an eternal symbol of self-realization through service, who said: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto ye, even so do ye also unto them."

IV

Much of the glory of this Light springs from its perpetual illumination of its own reflection. To be sure, the battered, listing, sinking human hulks out yonder seem to have nothing in common with "the light of the world," except to the cynic who is sure the light of Christ has burned itself out. The newsboy, approaching you late at night hoping more for a bit of friendly warmth than a sale, may suggest the torn remnant of a mob's fury, but hardly the Christ. That friend, whose credit has descended to zero because of his own unscrupulous acts, but who nonetheless approaches you in penitence for the loan which will start him anew and perhaps transform his life, looks more like the Satan than the Savior to us.

Yet it is in forms like these that the reflections of the Lord appear. It is to experiences like these that we shall have to answer one great day yonder. Will it be with utter amazement that you demand, "When saw I thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked or friendless?" Will it be necessary for the Light to go back over the years and re-illumine its reflection of itself before you will recall?

Human need cries out on every side of us for help, for reconstruction, for the touch of a heart of love. And the light of the world urges us to meet it. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

. . . .

The candles of civilization need to be rekindled, indeed. Not the light of things, nor the light of self, but only the light of self-sacrificing love—"the light of the world"—is sufficient to re-illumine them.

The Doorway to Life

By Williston Wirt

Behold, I make all things new. Revelations 21:5.

SOME day, someone is going to write a history of civilization in terms of doors. From the primitive curtain of goatskins to the medieval portcullis, and from the ancient wooden city gates to the steel barricade of the racketeer, there is recorded a legend which will reveal a great deal about the progressive stages of mankind.

Almost the first difference I noticed when I began my residence in this city was with respect to the doors. In the large metropolis from which I came a good many of the doors were rather formidable affairs. They were obviously built to discourage intrusion, and many were equipped with small apertures through which the caller was surveyed before being admitted. Doors are rarely found ajar in big cities.

But in Oregon it is different—at least that has been my experience. Doors are much simpler affairs. Doorbells are frequently superfluous, and I have yet to be greeted through a wicket. And I am glad, for I think doors are significant.

The most conspicuous thing about a prison, for instance, is the massive doors. I have had occasion to speak in prisons, and have experienced the elaborate ceremony required to gain admittance and egress. And I have somehow come to the conclusion that the more ceremony one has to submit to in order to pass through a door, the more it reminds me of Dante's motto: *Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.*

One time when I was a boy, my father rented an old factory which had lain unused and barricaded for some time, in order to convert it into a Welfare Institute. I remember entering that building with him for the first time, and going from room to room, upstairs and down, throwing off the barricades and opening wide the doors and windows. We can't live in buildings with closed doors and windows boarded over. Life demands air and sunlight. It demands open doors. The more living, the more the doors must be opened.

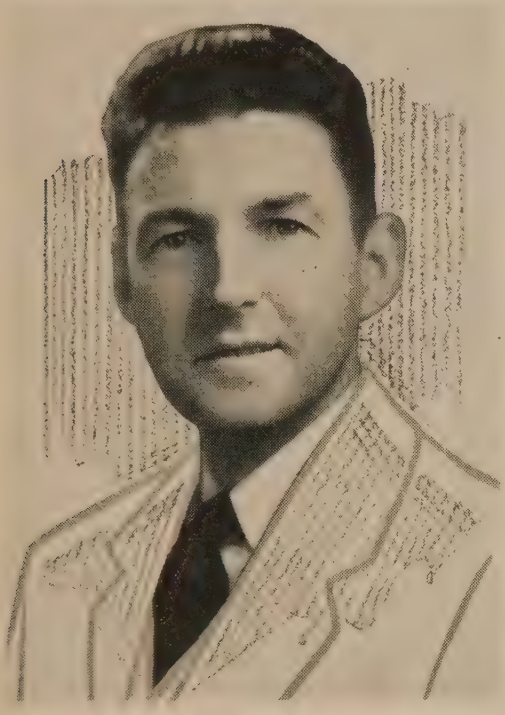
TWO CLASSES OF PEOPLE

Now human beings can, without much imagination, be divided into two great classes—those who close doors, and those who open them. And it is a very significant classification. For while there will always be those who prefer to abide by the status quo—who fear the changes which will come about from disturbing life as ordered at present—who are all for shutting the door on the world as it is, the hope for the future lies ever with the *open* door. The persons whose lives are going to be a blessing to the race are those who make it their duty to keep the affairs of life open to the sunlight of truth, and who throw open doors to new discovery.

For life is not made for closed doors. It is not a fixed and static thing. We may forget or try to hide our birthdays, but they keep coming with inexorable regularity. I don't understand all about the Einstein theory, but I see this much—when I throw a ball straight up in

the air and it returns to where I am standing, the path traveled by that ball is not a straight line up and a straight line down. It is a curve up, and a curve down. While it is in the air, the earth keeps on its everlasting turning, and to get back to me the ball must relate itself to the ongoing order. Evolution is not something that happened yesterday and then stopped. It is going on all about us, opening new doors every hour of every day.

I saw a statement attributed to Charles Kettering, the Edison of our day. He says: "Life is totally unpredictable. New inventions which will revolutionize life as much as the automobile or the radio are quite as likely to appear today or tomorrow." And no one can doubt it. Experiments are being carried on continually, and



Williston Wirt

continuous new discoveries are being made. Life is full of new doors which await only the coming of the kind of persons who can throw them open to reveal new treasures to us.

Now this is a matter that needs emphasis, especially in the Christian church. For of all institutions we need to be aware of open doors. Religion must not be permitted to jell into a set of rigid and prescribed doctrines or it will indeed lose its contact with life—pulsing, ongoing, evolving life.

Jesus himself was constantly opening new doors in the religion of his day. "It was said to you of old, love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemy." St. Paul was another who opened doors. He took the Christian faith at a time when it threatened to harden into one more narrow Jewish sect, and he carried it almost singlehandedly all over the civilized world. Paul also tried to close one door. He relegated women to a subservient position. Full many a Bible literalist has tried in vain to keep that door shut.

LEARN—OR PERISH!

Dorothy Canfield Fisher has written a book she calls *Learn or Perish.* Most of us, she says, are openminded with respect to our own professions. We seek to find, and to know, all there is to know about that which will advance us professionally—improve our efficiency to make money and acquire ease and comfort, but few of us ever attempt to open the doors of the mind to any of the great burning issues that confront us as persons possessing an immortal soul, and formed in the image and likeness of God. Everything to live with, and nothing to live for! Specialists in teaching or plumbing or finance, but ignorant with respect to creating a loving home, or helping young people go straight, or creating a better world. Raymond B. Fosdick says: "Under our present regime man seems to exist not in order that he may be happy, but in order that machines may be prolific. Certainly our emphasis upon the economic side of life, our preoccupation with the physical means by which we live, has become a universal malady that has robbed us of balance and perspective." "Learn, or perish," says Mrs. Fisher.

I think this is fundamentally true. A liberal minister of our denomination had been particularly disturbed by the activities of a premillennialist group whose world view approximates that of the second century, and whose slogan is well known: Millions now living will never die. He proceeded to make known his larger faith by preaching a sermon with the title: Millions now living are already dead!

Someone with imagination tried to fancy a conversation which might have taken place between an ancient dinosaur and a modern scientist. It goes something like this:

Says the Scientist: Listen, old fellow, your environment is in for a bit of a change. Those glaciers are receding, and these swamps will soon dry up. There will be new kinds of vegetation, and you will have to change your diet. But don't be worried—you can adapt yourself to the change. You won't perish, as long as you are willing to learn new habits and keep abreast of the new events which life keeps evolving.

But the Dinosaur remains unperturbed. Says he: I'm the biggest living thing on this earth. And the reason I'm so big is because I give all my attention to my own affairs, and never believe all the nonsense I hear. It's no use, Mr. Scientist. Once a Dinosaur, always a Dinosaur. You can't change human nature.

THE DINOSAUR MIND

Learn, or perish! The dinosaurs decided not to learn, and they perished. And there are hosts of human beings whose whole philosophy of life is reminiscent of the dinosaur mind. Our own environment is undergoing radical changes all the time. Glacial barriers are receding, and swamps are clearing up. The Battle of New Orleans was fought fifteen days after the Treaty of Peace had been signed at Ghent, because no way of relaying news quickly existed in 1815. All the raw materials were in existence; yes—but no human mind

had as yet opened the door of its secret. Today a former United States senator discusses his youthful errors, and forty million people hear him at the same instant, sitting in their own homes. Among the favorite adventure stories of a generation or two ago were those incredible yarns of Jules Verne: *Around The World in Eighty Days; Five Weeks In a Balloon; Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.* Our parents regarded those thrillers much as our children regard the fanciful adventures of Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon. But around the world, in the air, under the sea, man has already accomplished more than the wildest novelists of the nineteenth century ever conceived.

Doors have been opened in abundance, but the dinosaur mind is still serenely unconscious of living in a changing and ongoing world. There are many sectors such as war, and race prejudice, and the treatment of young criminals in which we still try to maintain the environment of the outdated past. This is not just an inconsequential anomaly. It is a serious matter. Either we must learn, or all of our most cherished institutions and our advanced civilization will certainly perish!

The individuals today who will render the most service to their fellow men are those who are able to understand the implications which a changing tempo of life makes upon our environment, and can teach us how to respond wholeheartedly to them. There are indestructibles and unshakables in life, but our relationship to them must be constantly checked against the flow and movements of life.

SALVATION NOT A CLOSED ISSUE

Take this whole matter of being a Christian, for example. A friend was telling about a certain party who could name the exact minute and hour and day she was "saved." It had happened "just like that," and then it was all over with. It was "in the bag" as the students say. It was finished, settled; the die was cast once and for all, and nothing on earth could change it one way or the other from now to eternity. Bang! Listen to the door slam!

There is something essentially tragic about that. It certainly cannot be reconciled with an evolving creation. For not even Christian character can ever be a closed issue. It is something we build up, that we create constantly, by our whole attitude toward our surroundings. You are not precisely the same person you were one week ago. During even that slight interval your environment underwent many changes. You met with problems that required solution. You associated with people who called out from you a response. You went about, and what you met, and what you did about it, has made of you a different person. Someone took you to task, and you smoldered. Someone praised you, and you were radiant. (Oh, that we all paid more attention to what our praise does to people!) And so today you are you, plus another week of living experience. And here we are in church again, looking at this self-plus, laying it on the altar before God, and consulting his mind about it.

If you should ask me what the primary purpose of the church service is, I would say that it is this: it is to enable us week by week to look within ourselves, and see what God sees, and, in the light of that penetrating revelation, consecrate ourselves anew to the creation of something more noble and more worthy. Sundays are judgment days, and no one who faithfully worships God in this church, or any other holy place, need ever fear a more final judgment.

A favorite response of people who are given an invitation to join a church is this: "I'm not good enough." My reply is: "Church membership is an open door!" That is the only possible way it can have any meaning that is consistent with this fluid life of ours. To make it a shut door between the godly and the unrighteous is to deny its true purpose. "I came," said Jesus, "not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance." The church is composed of sinners—but with this significant qualification—we are sinners who have our faces to an open door. We are resolved that we shall not stay sinners, at least not because of the same repeated sins. We believe human nature can be changed, and we are Exhibit A in the process. We are resolved to keep the doors of our lives open to the healing sunlight of Almighty God.

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW

As we leave this building today, you will not be, and I will not be, exactly the same persons we were when we entered. An hour has passed. Time has marched on, and so have we. And by having taken part in a worshipful experience we have had our spirits uplifted. We have taken account of the past, and we have determined that as far as in us lies, we will try to live in this ongoing world as our renewed experience of God makes us conscious that we should.

But even that is not the end!

For there is tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. And through them all and in them all we will be creating something new. God and we together will engage in new experiences. We will walk through newly opened doors, out into life on higher levels of experience, growing bit by bit, until at last death shall overtake us. And even then, we have full faith to believe, another open door awaits.

The Universe About Us

The pathway of nature appreciation is the path to a new knowledge and experience of God. William Watson has suggested that in heaven and earth and sea, the wonderful trinity, God has clothed himself, and sick and sore humanity may find healing at the touch of his robe.

We become aware of the healing touch of nature when we bring to the ministration of the open air our perplexities and problems. As we study the universe with the scientist, we find it dependable and uniform in its dependability. We find it not only responsive but generous, even to prodigality. We find in it infinite variety; we find impartiality.

So science enlarges our idea of God, and we say with Herbert Spencer: There will ever remain the one, absolute certainty, that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite Energy from which all things proceed.

The Christian Leader.

Abiding in Christ

By H. M. Wyrick

I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5.

IN the fifteenth chapter of John, Jesus relates the parable of the vine and the branches, in which he sets forth the living union between himself and those who believe in him. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." Christ is absolutely indispensable and vital to the life of the church. Without him our lives are barren and fruitless. Not only the first disciples, but multitudes throughout the Christian centuries have proved in their own experience that Christ, being received by faith, imparts a source of life and power beyond their own. He is the living fountain of all our spiritual energies. He is the moral stem of humanity; and all fruits of goodness and virtues are the product of his living Spirit pouring itself into the hearts of men and supplying the energy by which they live.

Outside of Christ our work has no enduring value. The man who goes to his work without dependence on Christ will not count in the final results. Had Peter gone trusting in his native energy and powers of leadership, had Paul trusted in the massiveness of his thinking, or John in the depth of his spiritual insight, all would have been found utterly inadequate. But we find each of them, earnestly and with united voice, disclaiming all power of their own, and confessing that all they do is by the power of the living Christ. It is equally true of us that in ourselves we are powerless to touch human hearts and change human lives. It is only as we abide in Christ, and as his strength abides in us, that we are transformed into spiritual conquerors. The kingdom of God will have its birth among men when they stand at the limit of their power and step out into the power of God.

WHAT AILS THE CHURCH?

The church today is accused of impotence. It is blamed for not preventing the great catastrophe which overtook the world in 1914. We are told that something vital has been wanting in our Christianity, the lack of which has brought confusion and ruin to the nations. We are told the church has lost its radiance. Once on the march, it lies now by the roadside, its very life in danger. While there are multifarious schemes in which we engage, and lavish expenditures of human energy, we are keenly aware of the futility of most of our devices, and thoroughly alive to the necessity of a strength beyond ourselves. What fruit can we show that abounds to eternal life? The only thing that can transform the life of the church today is the dynamic presence and the abiding Spirit of Christ. The church's supreme need and the world's supreme hope is to awaken to the mighty truth, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."

A celebrated explorer of the upper Amazon tells how, when compelled to make a succession of forced marches, his carriers went well for two days, but on the morning of the third day he found them seated on the ground, motionless. The leader, on being asked for the reason, said: "They are waiting. They cannot move till their souls have caught up with their bodies." Finding themselves faint, they assumed in their primitive way that their bodies had outrun their spirits.

It appears there isn't anything more wonderful than man's mastery of the physical universe, unless it be his continuing failure to master himself. It would seem as if the marvels of our proud scientific age would never cease. Resolutely we have subdued the earth, the sea, the air, and now even the ether. Man is constantly

H. M. Wyrick

achieving things that no other creature on earth gives a sign of possessing the faculties to do. He throws a film of wire, like a gossamer, around the earth, over which he whispers his thoughts. He can explode a molecule and make it drive an automobile. He can focus a ray of light on another man in a distant city and make that man visible. He can even dispense with the ray of light and see him in the dark. We are delighted with ourselves and the wonders we can perform, yet all the time our hearts are hungry, our minds are restless and dissatisfied, our spirits are bewildered.

We need a Power not ourselves that makes for sympathy, encouragement, righteousness, and smooths the intricate path of life for our feet. With all the abilities we boast, with all the powers we try to persuade ourselves we have acquired, we feel impotent in the face of what we know our destiny to be. Life would be worth living from now on, if the next hundred years would bring as many brilliant conquests in the sphere of the

human soul as the last hundred years have brought in the way of outward progress. As we realize these things, we are driven back to Christ. He holds the key to all that is most permanent in human endeavor, to all that is deepest and best in human character. Not until we renew our hold upon Christ, and intelligently enter into his purposes, can we have courage, hopefulness and a strength to prosecute our work, and only in him can we take our place as partners with God in what he is doing with this world. Precisely at the point where life gets beyond us, Christ offers to take it over. Whenever our resources become exhausted, his become available.

"WE WOULD SEE JESUS"

Walt Whitman was listening one night to an astronomer lecturing on the stars. The hall was stuffy, the lecture dull, and its charts and diagrams unilluminating, until, says Whitman, "I could bear it no longer, and I rose and wandered out of the house, and looked up at the stars themselves." We have been poring over charts and diagrams of religion, the mere mechanism of the faith, the machinery of organization, while the New Testament is calling us to come out of these stuffy places and look up with our eyes and see the bright and morning Star. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is on the face of Christ Jesus." The only way to know anything about God is to see Jesus for ourselves. The world is saying to us, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Thomas Chalmers preached for years a cold, dry, formal religion but one day Christ gripped him, and the dead gospel came alive, had hands and feet, and a heart throbbing like the heart of Jesus.

Christ's lordship extends to all life. If a nation abides in Christ, and his Spirit of truth and grace courses through the various channels of its life, it will blossom with happiness and prosperity, and bear the fruits of righteousness; but without him the blossom will fade and the fruit shrivel. Christ is the moral pivot around which the best life of the world revolves. He is not only the dynamic by which individual men are changed into the image of God, but he is the only power by which a sin-ridden, selfish social order can be transformed into the kingdom of heaven upon earth. There are those who question the authority of Christ over politics, national and international life, industry and economics. They challenge the competence and the right of the church to enter these spheres. The blame rests chiefly with us because we have weakened the jurisdiction over life which our Lord committed to his church. We have failed to assert the adequateness of Jesus Christ for human lordship and world leadership.

THE ONLY SURE LEADERSHIP

In dealing with every ill that afflicts our modern life, we must turn to Christ. The hope of this world does not lie mainly in the progress of secular education and enlightenment. The hope of humanity is in the power of the gospel of Christ to meet the moral and spiritual needs of the age. The redemption of civilization is possible only as the personality of Jesus and the ideas and ideals for which he lived and died are brought to bear upon every range of man's thoughts and activity.

Only as we abide in Christ can we lay the foundation for world friendship and peace. At his feet the whole outworn system of war, the last great relic of barbarism to afflict human society, stands forever condemned. As Dr. Fosdick says: "The fact has been written in fire across the world, until not seers alone, but multitudes of plain people of every tongue, tribe and nation under heaven are beginning to see the truth that if mankind does not end war, war will end mankind." There is only one sure leadership that can guide this old weary world out of the dark valley of strife into the sunlit plains of peace, and that is the One whose name is Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Amid the grave confusions of our times, when so many of the proudest works of man have been brought to naught, and human energy is faced with tasks beyond man, we are called to proclaim with greater insistence than ever before, the utter need and all-sufficiency of Christ. To abide in Christ lies in the union of elements too often profoundly separated. It means a greater recognition of the worth of the inner life, a richer spiritual experience. But he is not to be found alone in the cloisters of life. His abiding Spirit must be in all human relationships. We have too often given an incomplete interpretation to abiding in Christ. We must abide with him in the sanctuaries of our own souls until we are filled with his presence and led to a perfect obedience to the loving will of God. We must also abide in him as we bear his cross in the service of every holy cause, translating our loyalties to Christ into terms of loyalty to the world for which he died, bearing in our hands the stigmata of the Master, which come from identification of our lives in service with the life of all mankind.

Birds and Beasts—Friends or Enemies?

A Sermon for Children

By John R. Wilkie

JUST the other day there came to me a scientific magazine with two interesting pictures. One of them was that of a boy with young flickers all over him. Now the flicker, you may know, is a bird that gets its living mostly from the worms and bugs that bring death to the trees; a beautiful bird he is with one of the cheeriest songs of any of the birds that I know. One of them was on the boy's knee feeding from his hand, one was on each shoulder, and two of them were hanging to the hair of his head. The other picture was that of an old man playing the flute with a young squirrel hanging to the end of the flute as if to find out where all that sweet sound was coming from, while a saucy young bluejay sitting on the flute was scolding him as only a bluejay can for his stupidity.

Many tales are told of men who were friends with the birds and animals. In the Bible Elijah was fed by his friends the ravens. It is told of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the great men in the history of the church, that the birds and fishes listened to his preaching, and that he converted a man-eating wolf into a tame, re-

spectable town dog. Longfellow tells how Hiawatha talked to the birds and animals of his forest home and had them for his friends.

Whatever truth there may be in these tales, it is certain that we, like the boy and the old man in the pictures, may have the creatures for our friends if we want to and are willing to pay the price. Unfortunately we are most likely to follow the saying literally—"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"—and that means a dead bird; not knowing that in killing them we are murdering our best friends. One man tells us that if it were not for the birds we could not live on the earth more than ten years because in that time the bugs and worms would so increase that they would eat up every green thing on the face of the earth if the birds and the toads did not eat them up. Now I know a lot of boys and girls would like to be friends with the birds and animals if they only knew how to go at it.

Says the man who wrote the article about the boy and the old man: "All we need to do is to treat them as they are ready to treat us. All we need to do is to stand quietly, move slowly, make no needless loud noises. Above all (and this is hardest of all for acquisitive human nature) we must not grab!" So you see it means first of all self-control, one of the hardest and most important lessons we all have to learn. We must have a feeling of sympathy with the animals and birds—that is, try to see things as they see them and meet them half way.

Long ago a wise man wrote about getting human friends: "He that would have friends must show himself friendly." The same thing is true if we want to make friends of birds. This we can do by supplying them the two things they so much need even as we do, food and water. The other day I was watering my avocado trees with a hose that had a leak just a little way from my hand. There came a flash and a whirring of wings, and there in the spray from the leak almost within reach of my hand was a little mite of a ruby-throated humming bird quenching his thirst and washing the dust from his flashing plumage. Many of you live where the ground will for months be covered with snow and the birds that do not go south for the winter will have a hard time to find food enough to eat. Put out a feeding board with a roof over it, keep a supply of grain on it and see what happens, and my word for it, you will get more pleasure out of being friends to the birds and animals than you ever did or will from seeing them lying cold and dead from what you have done to them.

If, as Jesus taught, our Heavenly Father cares for the birds of the air, shall we not do as much?

A Pastoral Prayer

By Harvey J. Moore

O God, our Father Everlasting, we present ourselves before Thee in a spirit of devotion, in a mood of reverence, realizing that Thou art the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; who dwelleth in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. We wait before Thee in eager expectancy that Thou wilt enlighten our minds with Thy truth; kindle our hearts with Thy love; and strengthen us with might by Thy Spirit in our inward parts.

Help us to pray with the Spirit and with the understanding also the words our Master taught us: Thy Kingdom come. As we offer this petition grant unto us, we beseech Thee, the faith to believe that the answer will not forever be denied; faith to believe that this world in which we live may actually become the kind of world in which men may find it possible to do Thy will even as it is done in heaven. Give us the vision of a world so ordered that every man who so desires may love his neighbor as himself, whether that neighbor be black or white, or brown or yellow; and whether he live on the other side of the earth or only next door; a world so organized that every man can deal justly with all other men without imperiling his own life or the welfare of those whom he loves and who are dependent upon him; a world so illumined with the light of truth and wisdom that all men may be able to discern what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. So help us to pray, and to work, that this world may become in truth the Kingdom of our Lord.

To this end, we ask that Thou wilt teach us to understand one another better so that we may discover the "divine art of living together." Remove from among us all bitterness and distrust in our dealings with one another, and in the relations of groups and classes of men. Help us to overcome the deceitfulness of our hearts and to forsake the wickedness of our ways. Bring us to repent of the evils we have done and to seek Thy forgiveness who hast never turned any away.

We pray for those into whose hands have been committed the responsibilities of government and leadership in the nations of the earth. Give to them both vision and passion for truth and justice, that by their counsels all nations may come to dwell together in true neighborliness. Especially do we commend to Thee the President of the United States. Thou knowest the disheartening and dehumanizing conditions that prevail in our country today. Wilt Thou increase the wisdom and enlarge the sympathy of our leader, and give to all of us a spirit of willingness to do our part in everything that is constructive and helpful in this perilous time. O Thou, who art mercy and justice, help us in this dark hour, we beseech Thee.

And now, Our Father, we pray for health and healing of body and soul. Lend us Thine aid in our personal problems, our individual difficulties, our weaknesses and our failures. Thou knowest the things we need: sympathy and understanding; comfort and courage; wisdom and strength: these we ask of Thee who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. Amen.

Not Funerals, But Memorial Services

By Roscoe Graham

THE article entitled "Decent Christian Burial?" written last year by Hugh Stevenson Tigner for The Christian Century, kindled a very wide interest. May I suggest three or four ideas and add a bit of wood to the fire? Since the day twenty-five years ago when I saw a woman whose mother had died and who was left absolutely alone, stand up most courageously until the casket was lowered into its grave and then crumple most helplessly, I have been tremendously interested in this matter.

And the first thing I would like to say is that the good people with whom I have to do never hear me speak of a funeral. As far as possible we have memorial services rather than funerals. I encourage men and women whose souls are stricken to move in the very opposite of a funereal atmosphere. It is our business, if the darkness cannot be altogether dispelled, to let in upon them every ray of sunshine that can be had.

● *Music an Important Element*

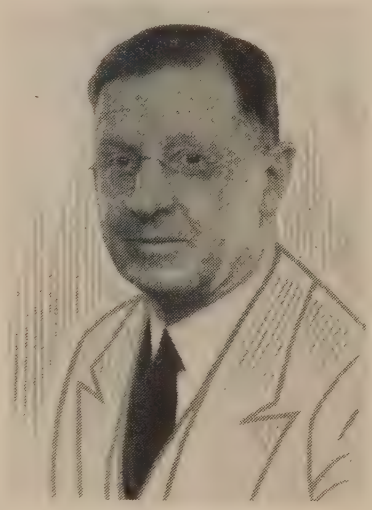
Most of our services include a good deal of music. We do not have vocal music as much as formerly, but almost always we have organ or other instrumental music at the beginning and again at the close of service. But whether vocal or instrumental, or both, what a contribution music can make in comforting and strengthening needy souls! Without mentioning certain long time "favorites" whose minor strains and thoughts have seldom, if ever, lifted bowed hearts, I want to bear testimony to the strengthened faith and positive uplift that men and women and even youth have felt in hearing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "How Firm a Foundation," "I Would Be True," "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go."

Only lately, when I was in a home where a fifteen-year-old lad had died, and some of these hymns were played at the memorial service, the good father, standing up like Gibralter, put his arm about his wife and said: "My dear, sometime soon we are going to look back on this day as a day of triumph."

● *Saying the Right Things*

And then what things shall be said? And how shall these be said? The criticism has often been made, and justly, even of services where choice passages of Scripture have been read and well formulated prayers have been intoned, that they were too impersonal and "cold." At the opposite pole, where eulogies are given, it is most difficult to avoid being either inadequate or fulsome. And if these are not true to fact, even in their minutest detail, certainly they are better unspoken. What then shall be said? And how?

Others may well choose to do quite differently, but in the main I follow one or the other of two practices. Sometimes I read a number of poems on immortality, beginning with selected verses from the 139th Psalm and closing with the 23rd Psalm, and never



Roscoe Graham

failing to tell in a sentence or two before reading each intervening poem just why I read this poem on this particular occasion. Thus, if there is the desire to call attention to a child's innate faith in immortality, one can read Wordsworth's "We Are Seven." If it be desired to direct attention to the mature faith of ripe scholarship that all of life is not lived here and now, one can take up Edwin Arnold's "He Who Died at Azim." If the occasion calls for emphasizing the fact that we go on bearing that character which we have developed here one can read James Whitcomb Riley's comforting poem "Away." If he would suggest reunion with loved ones either gone before or to follow after, he can take up the selection in Whittier's "Snow Bound" beginning with the words "O time and change" and continuing through the lines "For life is ever lord of death, And love will never lose its own." Other thoughts may suggest yet other selections.

Then, when the service is over, the loved ones and friends, if they have found somewhat of undergirding and comfort in what has been offered them —and they quite generally do—can, if they wish, go back to these classics when the skies become clouded and see the light again.

● *Quoting the Right Scripture*

But there is another practice that I prefer to follow, namely, to select readings wholly from the sacred writings. When doing this, I say that we will listen to a few short passages from the Scriptures, not merely because it is usual to hear from the Bible on such occasions, but because in these particular passages about to be read we have some fitting and appropriate memorials for the life that has been lived among us and whose spirit God has now received to himself. Then perhaps it will be suggested that the 15th Psalm will be read and the reason will be given that here was a life of marked uprightness and integrity. If there be the desire to call attention to a peculiar sensitiveness to beauty that had characterized the life of the loved one, this may be mentioned, and there may be used the 8th and 9th verses of Philippians 4 with their "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

Has the one who has gone on been an extraordinary parent or capable teacher, how appropriate to speak briefly and simply of this, and then to read a portion of Matthew 18, together with verses 13 and 14 of chapter 19, in which there is presented a fine epitome of the Christlikeness of this interest in and devotion to childhood. Has the loved one been an especially benevolent soul, one would scarcely fail to read the first half of the parable of the final judgment, perhaps repeating at its close the words: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." And whatever the passages read, these or others, I like to close the reading by asking: Now what may be the outlook of one, or for one, who has lived in uprightness and love? And then I read in conclusion the 23rd Psalm or the opening verses of John 14.

● *Magnifying the Things Of the Spirit*

Such a service differs from a eulogy as a portrait is different from a photo-

graph. And further, the great passages of the Scriptures speak with a beauty and a majesty and a glory that none of us can command. And how men and women come to treasure these great classics with which the lives of their loved ones have been so linked! And what substantial and lasting comfort they have!

There are two other things that might be mentioned here. I put the first in the form of a question. Might not a great advance be made by keeping the casket closed during a service, if indeed it is present at all? I add the latter part of the question because I have witnessed the great gains that have been noted on some few occasions when this latter suggestion has been followed. But, if this be considered too advanced a step, why not at least keep the casket closed? If we truly believe in immortality, and if we are going to have memorial services instead of funerals, why make so much of the vacant house? Rather, let us in every way magnify the things of the spirit, the things that are not lost, the things that endure. To magnify other things is poor comfort; to magnify these is to offer real consolation.

● *The Question of Flowers*

Then there is this other thing to which careful consideration should be invited. More and more thoughtful people, instead of sending flowers to the memorial service, are sending a note to the family of the one who has passed on saying that they have made a contribution to a cause or a gift to an institution that the loved one had been interested in or had esteemed. Such a practice is not to be commended without qualification. Certainly flowers speak a message that is not spoken otherwise. And the presence of a few not too ornate sprays or wreaths at a service is desirable. But the lavish displays that are seen at some funerals really disturb, even embarrass, fine and sensitive souls. On the other hand, to know that the work, or interests, or memory of a dear one is being worthily perpetuated, even though modestly, is often a source of very real comfort.

● *New Phrases for the Committal Service*

And then the committal service. Great indeed is the need for getting away from mouthing unintelligible and meaningless expressions of obsolete ideas in this crucial moment. Here, if anywhere, there should be a high sense of responsibility for bringing to bear all of faith and hope and love that can be had. Nor can this be done without squaring our best thinking and our most careful utterance. Therefore may I submit that, following a word of Scripture, and preceding the final benediction, the thought of the committal service be revised to something like this—though not necessarily in these words:

"Inasmuch as God has received to himself the spirit of this loved one, we commit the body to its native elements, even as the spirit has returned to God who gave it. And while we have no disposition to deny the grief that is wholly natural in this hour, still we rejoice that we need not stand in the position of those who, being without faith and hope, find themselves obliged to say a last 'good-bye' or a final 'farewell,' but that we can take the position of those who, possessing themselves of such faith and hope as is ours, can say 'good-night,' while they look for the dawning of that morning when loved ones are greeted again with a glad 'good morning.'"

So often have I seen smiles break through tears on hearing frank and positive and hopeful words like these. And then of course let us always move away before the casket is lowered.

● *"Comfort Ye My People"*

The 40th chapter of Isaiah opens with these words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." If those of us who have this mission will understand that what the prophet said was, "Put you courage, put you courage into my people, saith your God," and that the only comfort that is worth while is that which comes from the possessing of a courage that makes one adequate to meet an adverse situation, we will be in a much improved position to fulfill our mission.

May God move us increasingly to offer to every sorrowing soul to whom we minister a really firm foundation on which to stand. And let us do this with an expanding concern for rendering this service ever more finely.

Quotable Verse

Prayer

MASTER divine,
We thank Thee for all new blessings,
For this new day
With its new opportunities of service for Thee and communion with Thee.
We thank Thee for landmarks passed
And new vistas opening ahead;
For new hope and new inspiration,
New national awakening, and new desire to serve our time and our country.

We thank Thee that, to those who love Thee,
The best is ever yet to be:
That, if we abide in Thee, we can never grow old,
For Thou, our Master, art eternally young,
Eternally radiant with the joyful energy, the freshness and buoyancy of youth.

We thank Thee for the sacred elixir of Thy Spirit,
Which wardeth forever from those who love Thee
All weariness of soul, all carking anxiety,
All discouragement in failure,
All old age of the soul.

From Prayers for Use in an Indian College.

The Way to Peace

WOULD you end war?
Create great Peace. . . .

The Peace that demands all of a man,
His love, his life, his veriest self;
Plunge him into the smelting fires of a work that becomes his child.

Give him a hard Peace; a Peace of discipline and justice. . . .
Kindle him with vision, invite him to joy and adventure;
Set him to work, not to create *things,*
But to create *man;*
Yea, himself.

Go, search your heart, America . . .
Turn from the machine to man,
Build, while there is yet time, a creative Peace. . . .

While there is yet time!
For if you reject great Peace,
As surely as vile living brings disease,
So surely will your selfishness bring war.

JAMES OPPENHEIM.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

Rev. SAMUEL H. MILLER *is minister of* the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Cambridge, Mass., on the edge of Harvard Yard. Earlier pastorates were in Belmar, Arlington and Clifton, N. J. Mr. Miller was for a time chairman of the Committee of Fifty for Social Action in Passaic Valley, in New Jersey.

Widely known as minister of Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, since 1901, Rev. HARRIS E. KIRK has enlarged his field of influence by frequent lectures at Princeton and Vanderbilt Universities, Hartford, Yale, Presbyterian and other seminaries. He has been Professor of Biblical Literature in Goucher College since 1928. For many years he was summer preacher at Westminster Chapel, London. Dr. Kirk was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. in 1928.

Rev. STANLEY A. HUNTER *was ordained* in the Presbyterian ministry in 1914 and was minister of the Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, for a brief period. Then followed an eight year pastorate at North Church in Pittsburgh. Since 1924 he has led the activities of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, Cal. Mr. Hunter received his education at Princeton and Columbia Universities and at Union Theological Seminary.

Rev. GEORGE H. TOLLEY *ministers to* the Second Baptist Church, St. Louis. Following his graduation from the University of Rochester and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, he was junior minister of First Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo., under the late Dr. A. Ray Petty.

A graduate of Bethany College, Rev. MAURICE W. FOGLE received his B.D. from Yale in 1928, and for five years was minister of Centennial Christian Church, Bloomington, Ill. He is now pastor of Hamilton Avenue Christian Church in St. Louis. For a year he was president of the Ministerial Alliance of Greater St. Louis.

The father and grandfather of Rev. WILLISTON WIRT were Congregational ministers. His great-uncle was founder of the Pacific Theological Seminary. He attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Babson Institute and the College of the Pacific, and in 1930 was graduated from the Pacific School of Religion. For nine years he was director of religious education in churches of Oakland and Berkeley, Cal., and since 1936 has ministered at First Congregational Church, Eugene, Ore.

Graduating from Crozer Seminary, Rev. H. M. WYRICK became pastor of First Baptist Church, Grand Forks, N. D., ministering to the students of the University of North Dakota. Since 1930 he has been pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Omaha, Neb. Mr. Wyrick served four years as a member of the Board of Missionary Cooperation of his denomination, and was a delegate to the Baptist World Congress at Berlin in 1934.

Dr. JOHN R. WILKIE *is a professor in* Whittier College in California.

Rev. ROSCOE GRAHAM *is pastor of Plym*outh Church, Milwaukee, Wis.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

HARRY KENDALL BOOTH, First Congregational, Long Beach, Cal. "The Sovereignty of Righteousness." John 16:33—"In the world ye shall have tribulations; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

OWEN HUTCHISON, First Presbyterian, U. S. A., Menard, Tex. "Our Convenient Christianity." Acts 24:25—"Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

JOSEPH W. REEVES, North Congregational, Winchendon, Mass. "High Inner Imperatives." John 3:30a—"He must increase."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of Sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

A. DALE FIERS, High Street Church of Christ, Hamilton, O. "I Believe in Missions." Acts 4:12—"And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

CHESTER W. ARMENTROUT, First Presbyterian, Columbus Grove, O. "Spiritual Resources." Phil. 4:19—"And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

D. E. WERNER, St. John's Evangelical, Carmi, Ill. "The Christian's Source of Power." Luke 5:12—"And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

CHARLES A. ROWAND, Bigelow Methodist, Portsmouth, O. "The School of Experience." Gen. 30:27—"I have learned by experience that God hath blessed me."

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa. "The Most Beautiful Word in Human Speech." Psalm 130:4—"There is forgiveness with thee."

ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN, Temple Beth Israel, Hartford, Conn. "Judaism in a Changing World." Psalm 24:1-6; Matt. 25:31-45.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE event of this month which I choose for this precious little space is not an event at all, but the anniversary of an event. It was one year ago, in July 1937, that Martin Niemöller was arrested in Germany. We published in the *Christian Century* his last sermon preached in his Dahlem pulpit. Since then he has been tried and after paying a small fine imposed on a technical point, was straightway freed by the court. But Niemöller is still a prisoner, kept it is said in solitary confinement in a concentration camp. Christians the world over remember him in their prayers. His life story from U-boat commander to pulpit is being read in English-speaking countries, though it is virtually suppressed in Germany. His sermons preached since the rise of nazism, published in a book entitled, *Here Stand I,* are among the really impressive utterances of Christian faith emanating from Germany. It is reported that his congregation remains faithful to him, and that a large prayer meeting was held on the anniversary of his arrest. Numerous meetings were held secretly to remember him in prayer. The story haunts me, as it must haunt any Christian person who is aware of it. It all seems like the ghost of primitive Christianity when the faithful gathered in the catacombs to pray for a beloved bishop who had been seized by the prefect. How much of our Christianity is driven today to the catacombs! When you think of Russia, and Turkey, and Germany, and Japan, and Italy, does it not seem as if we have gone back to the primitive church, or rather that primitive Christianity has come again to us? One cannot help wondering whether our American Christianity may not also be destined for an acquaintance with the catacombs.

Niemöller's Anniversary

The Book of the Month

THE CHURCH THROUGH THE CENTURIES, *by Cyril Charles Richardson. Charles Scribners' Sons, $2.50.*

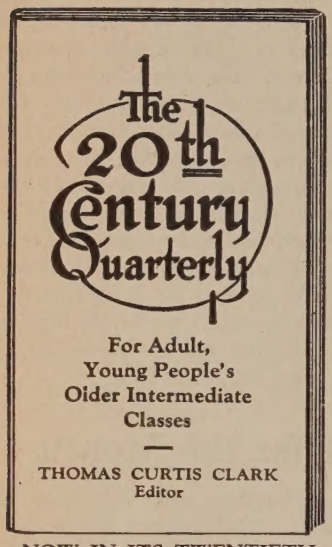
THIS book is an answer to a definite need. It is not a history of the church, but a history of the idea of the church, a tracing of the development of the church's own conception of itself from the simple spontaneous beginning as an informal and more or less ecstatic community, expectant of the instant return of the Messiah, through the long centuries of growth and adjustment to the outer world and to its own growing conception of the Christian faith. In saying that this book answers a definite need, I refer to the central position which the idea of the church has come to occupy in contemporary Christian thought. The Oxford Conference Library of eleven volumes represents the most important body of Christian writing which has appeared in this generation. Every volume deals directly or indirectly with the church. But it lacks a volume on history. Dr. Richardson has provided such a history. His work is projected and executed almost as if it were written while sitting in the sessions of the Oxford Conference! He looks at history through eyes that are focused upon the very problems which the contemporary church confronts. He shows how church order emerged out of primitive diversity, how the church dealt with its heresies, how, after Constantine, it was transformed both as to its secular orientation and its structure, how Augustine first confronted the question of the relation of church and state, how this relationship shifted through the Middle Ages, what new conceptions the Reformation introduced, and what non-Roman Christendom is now striving for in the ecumenical movement. The book is fascinating in the highest degree. I read it in the hospital and the nurse had to take it away from me when sleep-time came!

A Thought for the Month

FOR some time there has been quite a demand for an expurgated Bible. The demand arises both among biblical scholars and lay people. It is prompted by the fact that there is so much extraneous material in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, that it confuses the reader, if indeed it does not forbid his taking the Book seriously. This material is often crude, frequently irrelevant, incongruous with the higher portions of the Scripture, and some of it ethically bad. Let us, so runs the demand, have a pure Bible, one which includes only the good poetry, the truly great mythology, the moralistic interpretation of historic events, the best of the Psalms, and the great ethical and religious insights of the prophets, of Jesus, and of the epistles, omitting the dark eschatological portions and much of the dubious argumentation such as that of Paul in Romans and that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. With this demand I have no sympathy at all. There may be certain pedagogical or devotional uses to which a shorter Bible might be put, but the abridgement, if made, should faithfully keep the present proportion between the higher and the baser elements. An abridged edition purporting to include only the best elements would falsify the Bible. It would distort the revelation of himself which God made in history—it would give a wholly wrong impression of God's revelation. It would emasculate the Scripture of its power. There is no power in a puristic Bible. One glory of this book is in its incongruities. It shows God revealing himself not in a pious vacuum, but amid the primitivities, the uncouthness and the scrubby immoralities of concrete human life. Nothing would be weaker than a Bible which was 100 per cent pure. It would be a pale abstraction from life, and its influence upon life would be negligible. Let us thank God that he has given us the treasure of his truth in earthen vessels. For only thus could its power be imparted to us.

A Puristic Bible

Charles Clayton Morrison



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THOMAS CURTIS CLARK
Editor

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